

R Beard (John)

17

**THE
CASE
CONCERNING THE LATE
DISTURBANCE
AT
COVENT-GARDEN THEATRE,**

Fairly stated, and submitted to the Sense of the
PUBLIC in general.

AS the Opposition to *Full Price* at *Drury-Lane Theatre* was first founded upon the Pretence of its having been exacted on unjustifiable Occasions, it was imagined, let what would be the Event of that Dispute, the Managers of *Covent-Garden* ought, in no sort, to be affected by it; as no such Complaint had ever been pretended against them: Yet when Mr. *Garrick* thought proper to waive his private Advantage, for the sake of the Public Peace, it was deemed necessary, for the same laudable Purpose, to perform such Pieces only, for the present, at *Covent-Garden*, as could by no means bring the Point, which had been so lately, and so violently agitated, into immediate Debate again, and even **LATTER ACCOUNT** was taken to *Love in a Village*.

When the Opera of *Artaxerxes* was revived (a Piece as distinct from the common Course of Business as even an *Oratorio* itself) it was generally un-

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derstood, the Peculiarity of the Performance, together with the apparent extraordinary Expence attending it, would sufficiently exempt it from the Limitations which had been prescribed at the other Theatre. Accordingly, it was advertised in the same manner it had ever been, at *Full Price*.—Mr. BEARD received some private Hints the Evening before the intended Representation, though not till after the Bill was sent to the Press, that an Opposition was intended by some particular Persons; but flattered himself, that the Candour and Justice of the *Public in general* would distinguish in a Case so particularly circumstanced; and, when He was called upon the Stage, would have humbly offered such Reasons as, had they been calmly and dispassionately heard, might possibly have prevented the Violence which ensued: In this He was continually prevented by an incessant and clamorous Demand of a general decisive YES or NO.—As MANAGER only, and TRUSTEE for other *Proprietors*, He thought himself totally unimpowered to resign up their Rights by so sudden and concise a Conveyance; and as the Point in Dispute was an essential Matter of Property, conceived their Concurrence absolutely necessary to any Determination on his Part, which, at this Juncture, was impossible to be obtained.—In this difficult Situation, where *Acquiescence* subjected him to a Breach of that Trust which had been reposed in him, and *Refusal* exposed him to Insult and Displeasure, his submitting rather to the latter, than be guilty of the former, it is hoped, will be deemed an Offence not altogether worthy of severe a Re-
sentment.

However unfortunately he may have incurred the Imputation of *Insolence*, *Obstinacy*, or, at least, *Imprudence*, in not immediately submitting to the Demands proposed; yet, when it is considered, that these Demands were enforced by Part of the Audience only, and that he had then great Reason to believe such Submission would be very far from producing the salutary Effect of *Theatrical Tranquility*, he may not perhaps be judged so blameable.

Mr. BEARD had at that Time received several anonymous Threatening Letters and Notices concerning many other Branches of what they called Reformation.—He was ordered by one to add a *Farce* to *Love in a Village*, or the House should be pulled about his Ears.—By another, he was commanded to put a Stop to the farther Representation of that *Opera*, upon the Penalty of enforcing his Compliance, by a Riot the next Night of Performance; and very lately received certain Information of Meetings which have already been held, and an Association forming, to reduce the *Prices* at the Theatre, to what they were forty Years since, tho it is notorious the Expence of Theatrical Entertainments are more than doubled. For these Reasons, He looked upon the Occasion of the present Disturbance only as a Prelude to future Violences; as the first, not the last Salutation of this extraordinary kind, to be expected; and apprehended, that too easy an Acquiescence might possibly prove rather *Encouragement* than *Prevention*.

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Nevertheless, in gratitude for the many Favours and Indulgencies received from the PUBLIC, and from an earnest Desire to promote that Order and Decorum so essential in all Public Assemblies, the *Proprietors* have now jointly authorized Mr. BEARD to declare, that they shall think themselves equally bound with the *Managers* of the other *Theatre*, to an Observance of those Limitations which *they* have agreed to.

Mr. BEARD, though sensible how unworthy an Object his Character is, for the *Attention* of the PUBLIC, yet hopes his Zeal to have it appear in a fair Light, will not be deemed Impertinence, and therefore begs leave to mention one Occurrence that relates particularly to himself. It has been industriously reported, that both before and after Mr. Garrick's Submission to the *Point in Dispute*, he himself had expressly promised to give it up likewise, but has now insolently dared to resume a Right, which he had already disclaimed. How incapable Mr. BEARD is of such a Conduct, he flatters himself those who know him will testify: To those who do not, it may not be unnecessary solemnly to declare, that so far from ever making such a Promise, he constantly insisted, that it neither was in his *Power* or *Intention* to comply with the Demand.

JOHN BEARD.

George of the Public in General.
 Fully stated, and submitted to the
 Great Garden Theatre,
 The late Disputance at
 CONCERNING
 C. A. S. T.
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